

## SRI NIKUNJA GOPAL GOSVAMI

(1934-1986)

Nitya lila pravista Om Vishnupada Paramahansa 108 Sitanatha Kula Kaustubha Sri Srila Nikunja Gopal Goswami was born in the holy town of Navadvipa dhama in the 13th generation of direct descendants of Sri Advaita Acharya Prabhu, the joint incarnation of Mahavishnu and Sadashiva, who invoked the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu into the profane world. Prabhupada appeared in the world on the night of Durga Shasthi, a festival day in Bengal, the 14th of October, 1934 on the western calendar, as the youngest son of the renowned scholar and lecturer on raganuga bhakti, Prabhupada Srila Ananda Gopal Goswami.

His two elder brothers, Sri Kishora Gopal Goswami and Sri Govinda Gopal Goswami, also became greatly renowned scholars, lecturers and temple worshippers. In his youth Prabhupada was more charmed by the paths of Yoga and Tantra and initially wanted to take shelter of a Siddha Yogi, but nevertheless, seeing the great devotional prowess of his mother, Smt. Pratibha Sundari Goswami, he took initiation in Krishna Mantra from her in the month of Magha (January) of 1944.

He was self-educated in music and devotional knowledge, meaning that he learned the science of bhakti yoga entirely by hearing the lectures of his erudite father. One day, when his middle brother fell ill he had to give his first Bhagavata lecture, with astounding success. This was due to the fact that his father planted his footdust on his head. From early days onwards Prabhupada had been a great advocate of abstinence, and hence he remained



celibate in an exemplary way throughout his life. When Srila Ananda Gopala Goswami passed away from this world in 1961, he was so immersed in ecstatic feelings of separation from Smt. Radharani that he did not speak a word about the division of his heritage.

Prabhupada Sri Nikunja Gopal Goswami renounced whatever share was his and

went to the Himalayas to perform penances there. During his 8-year stay in the Himalayas Prabhupada performed many miracles. After a divine personality encouraged him to return to Navadvipa to take up his chore as a descendant of Sri Advaita Acharya to enlighten the people, Prabhupada returned to Navadvipa on January 17, 1970. Although he was initially found under a tree in Navadvipa's suburb of Prachina Mayapura as a near-naked sadhu, he soon began to attract more and more admirers and later made his re-entry into the lecture circuit of Navadvipa. However, because he could often not control his ecstatic feelings during the lectures he gave, he felt compelled to give up this status, since he always abhorred fame and reputation.

Nikunja Gopal Goswami set up the biggest festival in commemoration of Advaita Prabhu's appearance day in the whole world, the annual Sitanath Utsava. He did it without endeavouring for any money collection, depending totally on the Lord's providings. The final ten years of his glorious, but unfortunately rather short life, Sri Prabhupada spent in seclusion in his ashram in the sylvan surroundings of Prachin Mayapura. Although his health was very bad and he should have been suffering greatly, he was wholly undisturbed by the bodily tribulations and he left his mortal frame amidst blissful Krishna Kirtan on the 20th of October, 1986.

Apart from being a great musician, lecturer, teacher, cook, astrologer and temple priest, Prabhupada was also like a loving and compassionate father, guide and guardian to the many men, women, children and even animals who took shelter of his lotus feet. According to our propensity and level he enlightened us with his teachings, that were simple but sublime.

-Advaitadas